

Message Text

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R 311215Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY KABUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5593

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

CINCPAC HONO, HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 KABUL 8459

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AF

SUBJ: YEAR-END AFGHAN EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

1. SUMMARY. AFGHANISTAN CONTINUED ITS OWN BRAND OF NON-ALIGNMENT OF 1975. BEST ILLUSTRATIONS OF NIMBLE AFGHAN FOOTWORK IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS WERE: CONTINUED IN-FLOW OF FOREIGN ASSISTANCE; A VISIT OF SOVIET PRESIDUM CHAIRMAN PODGORNYY PRECEDED BY REMOVAL OF MANY SO-CALLED LEFTISTS FROM THE DAOUD GOVERNMENT; ASSURANCES TO THE U.S. AND THE PRC THAT THE AFGHANS DO NOT WANT OVER-DEPENDENCE ON THE SOVIET UNION; CONTINUED CONSOLIDATION OF THE NEW AND CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH IRAN; MAINTENANCE OF NON-ALIGNED "CREDENTIALS" IN UNGA VOTES.

2. AFGHAN-PAK RELATIONS CONTINUED TROUBLED OVER PUSHTUNISTAN-BALUCHISTAN, BUT WE BELIEVE DAOUD
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FINISHED 1975 WITH A DELIBERATELY SOFTER LINE

TOWARD PAKISTAN THAN HE BEGAN THE YEAR. WHAT HAPPENED IN BETWEEN WAS A SERIES OF SMALL INSURGENCIES DURING JULY THAT TOOK PLACE IN THE PANJSHIR VALLEY AND OTHER AREAS FRIGHTENINGLY CLOSE TO KABUL. RIGHTLY OR WRONGLY DAOUD BLAMED THE PAKS, AND IN DOING SO APPEARS TO HAVE HAD IT BROUGHT HOME THAT TOO MUCH ZEAL IN HIS PUSHTUNISTAN-BALUCHISTAN POLICY CAN HAVE NASTY CONSEQUENCES RIGHT IN AFGHANISTAN.

3. AFGHAN-U.S. RELATIONS ARE ON AN EVEN KEEL. DAOUD WANTS OUR POLITICAL AS WELL AS OUR AID PRESENCE IN AFGHANISTAN. HIS SUCCESSFUL BALANCING ACT VIS-A-VIS THE SOVIET UNION, THE CLOSER AFGHAN-IRANIAN RELATIONSHIP AND A LESS TENSE, AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING, PAK-AFGHAN DISPUTE ARE ALL IN OUR INTEREST. AFGHAN VOTES IN THE UN ARE OFTEN CONTRARY TO U.S. POSITIONS, BUT ARE AN INESCAPABLE PART OF A NON-ALIGNED STANCE ESSENTIAL TO AFGHAN INDEPENDENCE FROM ITS BIG NORTHERN NEIGHBOR AND OF AFGHANISTAN'S ISLAMIC TIES. END SUMMARY.

4. "BI-TARAFI": AFGHAN-NON-ALIGNMENT: THE AFGHAN POLICY OF WEAVING A COMPLEX PATTERN OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL DECISIONS INTO A CLOTH OF ABSOLUTELY NEUTRAL COLOR IS NOTHING NEW, BUT 1975 PRESENTED OCCASION FOR GRAPHIC DEMONSTRATION OF HOW THIS POLICY IS MAINTAINED.

5. CLEARLY THE MOST SIGNIFICANT FOREIGN RELATIONS EVENT OF THE YEAR WAS THE VISIT OF SOVIET PRESIDUM CHAIRMAN TO KABUL DECEMBER 9-10 (KABUL 8102 AND 8103 DEC 1975.) ALTHOUGH THE VISIT WAS BRIEF APPARENTLY HASTILY ARRANGED, AND BY ALL ACCOUNTS LACKING SIGNIFICANT BILATERAL CONTENT, IT WAS STILL IMPORTANT, FOR SUCH A GUEST FROM AFGHANISTAN'S LEADING TRADING PARTNER, MILITARY SUPPLIER, AND MASSIVELY POWERFUL NEXT-DOOR NEIGHBOR CANNOT COME AND GO LEAVING NO POLITICAL TRAIL. MOREOVER, IT WAS CONFIDENTIAL

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ONLY THE DAOUD REPUBLIC'S SECOND VISIT BY A HEAD OF STATE AND THUS HAS ADDED CONSEQUENCE. (THE FIRST VISIT WAS BY THE GOVERNOR GENERAL OF AUSTRALIA, SIR JOHN KERR, MARCH 5-7, 1975.)

6. ONLY AS A RESULT OF PODGORNÝ'S VISIT DID WE LEARN OF THE SIGNIFICANCE THE RUSSIANS ATTACHED TO FORMAL AND PUBLIC RENEWAL OF THE AFGHAN-SOVIET

"MUTUAL NON-AGRESSION AND NEUTRALITY TREATY OF 1931," WHICH WAS EXTENDED BY A PROTOCOL SIGNED THE DAY OF PODGORNÝ'S DEPARTURE. YET THE PROVISIONS OF THE AGREEMENT, WHICH PRECLUDE AFGHANISTAN'S BEING USED AS TERRITORY FROM WHICH ACTS INIMICAL TO SOVIET INTERESTS CAN BE CONDUCTED, IS IN FACT THE SINE QUA NON OF THE RELATIONSHIP, THE ROCK BOTTOM REQUIREMENT OF THE AFGHANS BY THE USSR. SUCH ASSURANCE LIKELY APPEARED ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT TO THE RUSSIANS IN LIGHT OF INTERNAL AFGHAN EVENTS DESCRIBED BELOW AND IN SEPTEL.

7. OTHERWISE ONE LOOKED IN VAIN FOR STATMENTS OF BILATERAL SIGNIFICANCE ARISING FROM THE VISIT. WHAT ONE FOUND WERE ANODYNE REMARKS ON BILATERAL ISSUES CITING AND AFFIRMING EARLIER AGREEMENTS, IDENTICAL JUDGMENTS OF SAFE AND DISTANT INTERNATIONAL ISSUES LIKE PALESTINE AND COLONIALISM, AND A TENUOUS FORMULATION ON THE ITEM OF APPARENTLY GREAT REGIONAL INTEREST TO THE SOVIETS (IE., THE ASIAN COLLECTIVE SECURITY PACT, WHICH THE AFGHANS AT THIS TIME WANT NO PART OF). THE RUSSIANS COULD HARDLY HAVE PICTURED DAOUD AS A WARM, GENEROUS AND IMPULSIVE HOST. THEY KNOW HIM TOO WELL. STILL, EVEN THE MOST STOIC MAJOR AID GIVER MIGHT HAVE HOPED FOR SOME INDICATION OF A "SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP," OR MERELY SPECIAL GRATITUDE. DAOUD APPARENTLY GAVE NON.

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8. IM SIMLAR VEIN,DAOUD TOOK PAINS TO ASSURE HIS AMERICAN FRIENDS THAT PODGORNYS VISIT WOULD SIGNAL NO CHANGE IN BIALTERAL RELATIONS. THIS WAS ESSENTIALLY HIS MESSAGE TO OUR AMBASSADOR WHEN DAOUD CALLED HIM IN ON NOVEMBER 29. DAOUD'S MESSAGE WAS THAT HE CONTINUES TO WANT CLOSE, FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH THE U.S., AND CONTINUED US PRESENCE IN AFGHANISTAN. IT IS CLEAR HE SETS STORE BY THE POLITICAL IMPACT OF THIS PRESENCE, AS WELL AS BY ITS USEFULNESS TO AFGHAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

9. EMBASSY ASSESSMENT IS THAT DAOUD SIMILARLY SET OUT TO ASSURE THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA THAT PODGORNYS VISIT WOULD NOT SIGNAL LESSENING OF AFGHAN TIES WITH CHINA. VEHICLE FOR THIS WAS, WE BELIEVE, THE VISIT OF A "CHINESE-AFGHAN FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY" TO AFGHANISTAN, WHICH WAS GIVEN PRESS PLAY AND PROTOCOL TREATMENT FAR BEYOND WHAT MIGHT BE CONSIDERED USUAL FOR SUCH A GROUP. (PRICTURE OF GROUP LEADERS VISITING WITH DE FACTO FOREIGN
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MINISTER WAHEED ABDULLAH APPEARED IN KABUL'S ENGLISH LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER ON SAME DAY PODGORNYS VISIT WAS ANNOUNCED.)

10. A COMPLETE UNDERSTANDING OF AFGHAN "BI-TARAFI" CANNOT HOWEVER BE GAINED WITHOUT A LOOK AT INTERNAL AFFAIRS. AFGHANISTAN IS ESPECIALLY SENSITIVE WHERE RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION ARE CONCERNED; THERE IS OBSERVABLE FEEDBACK BETWEEN DOMESTIC DECISIONS AND EXTERNAL EFFECTS. DAOUD'S SEPTEMBER 27 CABINET CHANGES (KBUL 6429) HAD, WE BELIEVE, AN UNSETTLING EFFECT ON AFGHAN-SOVIET RELATIONS, FOR THE FACT OF DAOUD'S DISMISSING ONE AND DEMOTING ANOTHER MEMBER OF WHAT CAN BE CLASSED THE "SOVIET FACTION" WITHIN THE AFGHAN CABINET, AND THE FACT OF HIS DISMISSING AND CHANGING SEVERAL GOVERNORS AND CAUSING SIGNIFICANT OTHER CHANGES FAR DOWN INTO THE HIERARCHIES OF THE MILITARY, THE POLICE, AND THE BUREAUCRACY HAD A KIND OF MULTIPLIER EFFECT.

MANY OF THOSE DISMISSED WERE NO DOUBT PARCHAMIST IN ORIENTATION OR DECIDELY PRO-SOVIET OR LEFTIST IN OUTLOOK; BUT THE SITUATION DURING OCTOBER, NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER SAW SUCH AN ABUNDANCE OF DEMOTIONS AND EXILES TO DISTANT PROVINCES, DISMISSALS AND CHANGES, THAT IT IS SAFE ALSO TO BELIEVE THAT MANY WHO WERE IN FACT MERELY AFLOAT IN THE HARD PLAYED GAME OF AFGHAN POLITICS WERE PAINTED RED BY THE FACT OF THEIR GOING OUT OR DOWN WITH DEEP RED COLLEAGUES.

11. THE EXTENT TO WHICH SOVIET-AFGHAN RELATIONS WERE AFFECTED BY THESE CHANGES IS NOT ALTOGETHER CLEAR. DELAYS IN DELIVERY OF SOVIET WEAPONS WERE ATTRIBUTED BY SOME AFGHANS TO SOVIET DISPLEASURE, ALTHOUGH THEY MAY AS WELL HAVE BEEN OCCASIONED BY PRODUCTION OR SHIPPING SNAFUS IN THE USSR. SQUABBLES OVER SELECTION OF AFGHAN POST-GRADUATE STUDENT CANDIDATES WERE SET DOWN BY SOME AFGHANS TO THE SOVIETS WANTING TO INTERRUPT A PROGRAM PROFITABLE TO THE AFGHANS, ALTHOUGH ANY AID-GIVING
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EMBASSY IN KABUL COULD WITHOUT DOUBT TELL OF SIMILAR PROBLEMS HAVING THEIR ROOTS IN NOTHING MORE SIGNIFICANT THAN BUREAUCRATIC DISORDER. STORIES REACHED US OF RANCOROUS EXCHANGES BETWEEN SOVIET MILITARY ADVISORS AND AFGHAN MILITARY ADVISEES, AND SENIOR AFGHAN MILITARY OFFICERS ARE KNOWN TO HAVE APPROACHED THE ITALIANS, THE BRITISH AND THE FRENCH TO REQUEST SPECIFIC KINDS OF MILITARY TRAINING OR SPECIFIC EQUIPMENT. WITHOUT GUESSING AT SPECIFICS IS CAN BE SAID THAT THE "CHAFE LEVEL" IN SOVIET-AFGHAN RELATIONS WAS HIGH.

12. DESPITE THESE ATMPOSPHERICS, THE EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT DEEP AND ABIDING INTERESTS OF THE SOVIET UNION REMAIN UNAFFECTED, AND THAT THE SOVIETS WERE REASSURED OF THIS DURING THE PODGORNÝ VISIT. MOHAMMAD DAOUD IS A GRUFF AFGHAN NATIONALIST AND PATRIOT, BUT HE IS ALSO A REALISTIC WORLD POLITICIAN WHO CAN READ A MAP. HE IS NEVER LIKELY TO ALLOW AFGHANISTAN TO BE USED AS A BASE FOR ACTIVITIES THE SOVIET UNION WOULD CONSIDER MENACING OR DANGEROUS.

13. DURING 1975 DAOUD'S OWN TRAVELS CONTINUED AND STRENGTHENED A POLICY OBSERVED SINCE THE INCEPTION OF HIS REGIME OF IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH STATES OF THE REGION, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF COURSE OF PAKISTAN. HE TRAVELED TO IRAQ,

INDIA AND BANGLADESH IN MARCH, AND TO IRAN THE MONTH FOLLOWING.

14. IRANIAN-AFGHAN RELATIONS CONTINUE TO GROW IN IMPORTANCE AND IRAN IS BEGINNING TO FIGURE IN AFGHANISTAN'S "BI-TARAFI" POLICY AS A SIGNIFICANT COUNTERWEIGHT TO RUSSIAN DOMINANCE IN ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL MATTERS. DAOUD'S APRIL VISIT TO TEHRAN, FOLLOWED BY PLANNING MINISTER KHURRAM'S TEHRAN VISIT IN OCTOBER WENT FAR TO REMOVE LINGERING AFGHAN SUSPICIONS OF THE SERIOUSNESS OF IRAN'S INTEREST IN AFGHANISTAN. TWO ASSISTANCE PROTOCOLS SIGNED DURING THOSE VISITS COMMIT IRAN TO PROVIDING OVER ONE BILLION DOLLARS WORTH
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OF AID TO AFGHANISTAN. IF AND AS IMPLEMENTED, THIS AID PROGRAM WILL REPLACE THE USSR WITH IRAN AS AFGHANISTAN'S LARGEST SINGLE AID DONOR. (EMBASSY HAS ALREADY NOTED SUBSTANTIALLY GREATER PRESS

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PLAY GIVEN AGREEMENTS WITH IRAN OVER THAT GIVEN A SOVIET AID PACKAGE WHICH AMOUNTED TO MORE THAN 400 MILLION ROUBLES.) MOREOVER, THIS NEW AID, LARGELY ORIENTED TOWARD TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS AND EXPORT INDUSTRIES, PROVIDES A BASIS FOR A NEW ORIENTATION OF AFTHANISTAN'S ECONOMIC GROWTH. INCREASINGLY, THE AFGHAN PRESS EMPHASIZES THE POTENTION FOR HARD CURRENCY TRADE WITH IRAN, THE GULF STATES, AND EUROPE, AND NEW BARTER TRADE AGREEMENTS ARE RECEIVING LITTLE PLAY IN EITHER THE VERNACULAR OR ENGLISH LANGUAGE PRESS. IN DISCUSSIONS WITH AFGHAN AND PAKISTANI EMBASSY OFFICIALS ABOUT "PUSHTUNISTAN," THE "IRANIAN CONNECTION" IS FREQUENTLY RAISED - WITH BOTH SIDES SUGGESTING THAT THE SHAH COULD HAVE A SIGNIFICANT INFLUENCE ON HOW THIS PARTICULAR GAME IS PLAYED IN FUTURE. THE LONG-TERM INFLUENCE OF IRAN ON "BI-TARAIF" WILL DEPEND LARGELY ON HOW QUICKLY AND COMPLETELY THE IRANIAN-AID FINANCED PROJECTS COME TO FRUITION. IF THE PROPOSED RAILROAD FROM KABUL

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TO THE IRANIAN BORDER IS BUILT, FOR INSTANCE, IRAN COULD HAVE AN ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL INFLUENCE IN AFGHANISTAN APPROACHING THAT OF THE USSR.

15. A POLICY OF CLOSE FRIENDSHIP WITH THE "NON-ALIGNED" WAS PURSUED BY DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER WAHEED ABDULLAH (IN EFFECT FOREIGN MINISTER, SINCE DAOUD OFFICIALLY CARRIES THAT PORTFOLIO) THROUGH VISITS TO DAMASCUS AND BELGRADE DURING JUNE, AND PARTICIPATION IN THE CONFERENCE OF NON-ALIGNED FOREIGN MINISTERS HELD IN LIMA DURING AUGUST. THE DEIPTY MINISTER ALSO VISIED JIDDA AND MOSCOW. ADHERENCE TO THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT WAS SPECIFICALLY CITED BY DAOUD IN HIS BANQUET SPEECH DURING THE PODGORNY VISIT. AT THE UNITED NATIONS, WHERE WAHEED ABDULLAH REPRESENTED AFGHANISTAN AT THE SEVENTH SPECIAL SESSION AND FOR THE BEGINNING OF THE THIRTIETH REGULAR SESSION, AFGHANISTAN'S VOTING PATTERNS WERE ORTHODOX "NON-ALIGNED". ALTHOUGH AFGHANISTAN CONTINUED TO ABSTAIN ON KOREAN ISSUES, AS IT HAS FOR YEARS, AND FAVORED THE UNITED STATES ON THE ISSUE OF PUERTO RICO, ITS UNITED NATIONS DELEGATION DISTINGUISHED ITSELF FOR ITS SENSITIVITY

TO EMERGING CONSENSUS AND ITS HOMING INSTINCTS
TOWARD THE MAJORITY.

16. IMPORTANT VISITORS TO AFGHANISTAN DURING THE
YEAR WERE CZECH FOREIGN MINISTER CHNOUPEK (WHOSE
VIST WAS IN PROGRESS DURING THE THIRTY-HOUR PODGORNÝ VISIT),
INDIAN FOREIGN MINISTER CHAVAN (WHOSE
LATE OCTOBER-EARLY NOVEMBER VISIT WAS
SHORTLY FOLLOWED BY THAT OF MR MOHAMMAD YUNUS,
BILLED HERE AS "MRS GHANDHI'S PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE"),
THE "FOREIGN MINISTERS" OF CAMBODIA'S
THEN RIVAL "GRUNK" FACTION (DURING JANUARY) AND
OF SOUTH VIETNAM'S THEN RIVAL "PRG" FACTION, AND
RAUF DENKTASH, LEADER OF THE TURKISH CYPRIOT COM-
MUNITY. THIS PROCESSION TOO WAS USEFUL FOR THE
"NON-ALIGNED" IMAGE.

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17. RELATIONS WITH PAKISTAN. THE DAOUD REGIME
APPEARS TO HAVE CHANGED ITS POSTURE TOWARD PAKISTAN
DURING 1975. THE CHANGE CLEARLY TOOK PLACE BETWEEN
THE "SHERPAO ASSASSINATION CRISIS" IN FEBRUARY AND
THE "NAP TRIAL CRISIS" IN NOVEMBER. THE INTERVENING
EVENT WAS THE "PANJSHIR INSURGENCY", DESCRIBED IN
SEPTTEL RELATING TO AFGHANISTAN'S INTERNAL SCENE.
THE ISSUE OF PUSHTUNISTAN IS AS REAL AS IT EVER WAS
FOR THE AFGHAN LEADERSHIP, AND THE ISSUE OF DISSID-
ENCE IN BALUCHISTAN STILL A TARGETABLE COLLATERAL
CONCERN. WHAT APPEARS NEVERTHELESS TO HAVE HAPPENDED
THIS YEAR WAS THAT DAOUD DREW A LINE ON ACTIONS AGAINST
PAKISTAN BEYOND WHICH, AT LEAST UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES,
HE IS UNWILLING TO GO.

18. THE PANJSHIR INSURGENCIES HAD A PROFOUND EFFECT
ON DAOUD. IT IS TO DATE THE MAJOR SCARE DELIVERED
HIM DURING HIS CURRENT REGIME, AND WHETHER COMPLETELY
JUSTIFIED OR NOT IN LAYING BLAME FOR
THE OCCURRENCES ON PAKISTAN, DAOUD HAS BEEN MADE
ACUTELY AWARE THAT TWO CAN PLAY THE GAME OF
STIRRING UP TROUBLES ACROSS THE BORDER. PANJSHIR
LAID BARE THE VULNERABILITY OF INTERIOR PROVINCES
OF AFGHANISTAN TO SUBVERSION AND DISSIDENCE, AND
CAN BE EXPECTED TO IMPOSE SOME RESTRAINT ON DAOUD'S
SPONSORING A FLOW OF MONEY AND ARMS, PERHAPS EVEN PEOPLE,
INTO PAKISTAN TO EXPLOIT ETHNIC TIES AND FAN PUSHTUN
OBSTERPEROUSNESS INTO OPEN ROVOLT. NOR, WE BELIEVE, DOES DAOUD
HARBOR MISIMPRESSIONS OF HOW HIS ARMY WOULD FARE
AGAINST A PAKISTANI FORCE, AND TEMPTATIONS TOWARD
OPEN MILITARY FORCE ARE THEREBY DIMINISHED. THIS

LEAVES ONLY DIPLOMACY AND PROPAGANDA CHANNELS IN WHICH TO CONTAIN A POLICY TOWARD PUSHTUNISTAN AND BALUCHISTAN, BOTH RELATIVELY TAME AND BOTH UNLIKELY TO ACHIEVE RESULTS DAOUD PROFESSES TO DESIRE. (THESE PROFESSIONS HAVE VARIED FROM A CALL FOR THE RIGHTS OF PUSHTUN AND BALUCH PEOPLES TO BE OBSERVED WITHIN FRAMEWORK OF THE PAKISTANI CONSTITUTION TO CALLS FOR WHAT WOULD AMOUNT TO AUTONOMY. WE BELIEVE DAOUD IN HIS HEART OF HEARTS DESIRES A GREAT DEAL MORE, BUT KNOWS HE CANNOT GET IT.).
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19. EMBASSY JUDGEMENT IS THAT DAOUD WILL CONTINUE TO CONDUCT HIS POLICY TOWARD PAKISTAN "WITH PULLED-IN HORNS". HE WILL SWALLOW HARD AGAIN, PERHAPS, AND TAKE SOME NEW "PROVOCATION" WITH THE SAME MEASURED RESPONSE HE BORE THE LATE OCTOBER DECISION BY THE PAKISTANI SUPREME COURT TO UPHOLD A BAN ON THE NATIONAL AWAMI PARTY, BHUTTO'S SPEECH IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING, AND BHUTTO'S FLOATING (RATHER BRAZENLY, IT APPEARS TO US) CHARGES OF AFGHAN MOBILIZATION, DURING LATE NOVEMBER AND EARLY DECEMBER, ALONG AFGHANISTAN'S BORDER WITH PAKISTAN. SHOULD BHUTTO'S OWN DOMESTIC SITUATION DETERIORATE, PRESIDENT DAOUD WILL ASSUREDLY BE STANDING READY TO PROVOKE A NEW KIND OF FRAY. HAVING ONCE ALREADY IN HIS LIFE HOWEVER BEEN UNSEATED FROM HAVING GONE TOO FAR IN HIS HOSTILITY TOWARD THE PAKS, EMBASSY BELIEVES DAOUD WILL DISPLAY AN ACUTE SENSE OF WHAT HE CAN GET BY WITH AND WILL NOT EXCEED THIS.
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